

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 00209 111524Z

46

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 SAJ-01

SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SR-02 ORM-03 CU-04 DRC-01 /170 W

----- 058743

P R 111418Z MAR 74

FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 171

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 002

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USUSN NEW YORK 013

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0209

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAMASC 00209 111524Z

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ASAD'S REVOLUTION DAY SPEECH

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT ASAD BROKE NO NEW GROUND IN HIS LONG REVOLUTION DAY SPEECH ON MARCH 8. IN A RELATIVELY BRIEF SECTION DEVOTED TO SYRIA'S FOREIGN POLICY, HE ESSENTIALLY REAFFIRMED CONTINUED SYRIAN "STRUGGLE" FOR LIBERATION OF ALL TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ALSO EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED SYRIAN ACCEPTANCE OF UN RESOLUTION 338. FINALLY HE NOTED THAT IF ISRAEL CONTINUES TO CLAIM THE GOLAN, SYRIA WOULD IN RETURN REASSERT ITS CLAIM TO PALESTINE WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "PART OF SOUTHERN SYRIA." THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF HIS SPEECH WAS APPARENTLY WELL RECEIVED, AS WAS THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF WHO WAS SHOWN ON LOCAL TELEVISION BEING EMBRACED AND KISSED BY A GROUP OF ENTHUSIASTIC NURSES. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MARCH 8, MARKING THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF SYRIA'S REVOLUTION DAY, PRESIDENT ASAD GAVE A LONG "STATE OF THE UNION" ADDRESS WHICH WAS TELEVISED AND CARRIED ON RADIO AND WHICH COVERED PRIMARILY INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS FOCUSING IN LARGE PART ON A LIST OF PROJECTS EITHER COMPLETED OR RECENTLY INITIATED BY THE BAATH PARTY IN SYRIA.

3. IN A RELATIVELY SHORT SECTION DEVOTED TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE PRESIDENT TOOK A LINE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HE HAS BEEN SAYING PUBLICLY OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS SINCE THE OCTOBER WAR. ESSENTIALLY, HE REITERATED THAT SYRIA WILL CONTINUE TO "STRUGGLE" TO REALIZE ITS AIMS, WHICH INCLUDE TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL THE TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. THE PRESIDENT STATED EXPLICITLY THAT SYRIA HAS ACCEPTED UN RESOLUTION 338 BUT ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE TWO AIMS. HE ALSO ALLUDED TO RESOLUTION 242 SAYING THAT "IT IS NOT IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS WHO IS FOR OR AGAINST THIS RESOLUTION" BUT TO NOTE THAT "ALL OF US ARE FOR IT, IF IT MEANS THE LIBERATION OF TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967." HE UNDERScoreD THE FACT THAT THESE GOALS HAVE ALSO

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DAMASC 00209 111524Z

BEEN SPELLED OUT IN "OUR BILATERAL TALKS." SPEAKING EXTEMPORANEOUSLY, HE THEN NOTED SARCASTICALLY GOLDA MAIR'S RECENT CALIM THAT THE GOLAN IS PART OF ISRAEL AND WENT ON TO "REMIND ISRAELI OFFICIALS THAT PALESTINE IS NOT ONLY A PART OF THE ARAB WORLD. BUT ALSO A PRINCIPAL PART OF SOUTHERN SYRIA." HE CONCLUDED THIS SECTION OF THE SPEECH BY WARNING ISRAELI OFFICIALS THAT THEY ARE WRONG IF THEY THINK THAT SYRIA IS "TIRED OF STRUGGLE, TIRED OF

WAR AND TIRED OF SACRIFICE" AND WILLING TO ALLOW ISRAEL TO ABSORB ITS CONQUESTS.

4. IN THE ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT THUSFAR, GOVERNMENT NEWS-PAPER AL-THARWA ON MARCH 10 PICKS UP THE SAME THEMES STRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT QUOTING HIM THAT "WE TRUST OURSELVES, WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT AND WE WILL NEVER ACCEPT LESS THAN WHAT WE WANT. WE ARE NOT CEDING AN INCH OF THE ARAB TERRITORY AND WE WILL NOT BARGAIN ON THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

5. COMMENT: I DO NOT THINK PRESIDENT ASAD BROKE ANY NEW GROUND IN HIS SPEECH, PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATED TO SYRIA'S CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY. THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY SEVERAL OF MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES WITH WHOM I HAVE SPOKEN. I THINK THAT THE PRESIDENT'S ALLUSION TO PALESTINE AS BEING PART OF SOUTHERN SYRIA WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SYRIA CAN ALSO PLAY THE ISRAELI GAME. THUS, IF ISRAEL INSISTS ON LAYING CLAIM TO WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SYRIAN TERRITORY, THEN SYRIA CAN ALSO RESURRECT ITS NOT SO ANCIENT CLAIMS TO TERRITORY WHICH BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS CONSIDERED PART OF OTTOMAN SYRIA. I DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT HE MEANT THIS SYRIAN COUNTER-CLAIM TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY ANYMORE THAN SYRIA TAKES GOLDA'S CLAIM SERIOUSLY. MEANWHILE, LOCAL TV GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO THIS SPEECH AS WELL AS TO OTHER EVENTS IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT PARTICIPATED SUCH AS THE OPENING OF VARIOUS UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS, ETC. INTERESTINGLY, THE TV ALSO SHOWED THE PRESIDENT BEING LITERALLY OVERWHELMED BY A GROUP OF YOUNG NURSES WHO BROKE THROUGH HIS HONOR GUARD AND PROCEEDED TO EMBRACE AND KISS HIM. SUCH FEMININE OUTBURST ARE EXTREMELY RARE IN THE ARAB WORLD AND I HAVE NEVER SEEN THE LIKE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DAMASC 00209 111524Z

OF IT BEFORE. LOCAL OBSERVERS SAY THE ONLY OTHER ARAB LEADER EVER WELCOMED IN SYRIA IN A SIMILAR FASHION WAS NASSER AND POINT TO THIS AS A GENUINE INDICATION OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR ASAD, WHOSE SPEECH HAS ALSO ELICITED A FAVORABLE LOCAL REACTION TO ITS FOREIGN POLICY SECTION.

SCOTES

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, PEACE PLANS, INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DAMASC00209
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740354/aaaabyhb.tel
Line Count: 160
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <29 JAN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT ASAD'S REVOLUTION DAY SPEECH
TAGS: PFOR, SY, (ASAD, HAFIZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005